QUESTION AND PROPHECY.

Maiden with the soft brown eyes,
Do life's songs outweigh its sighs?
Hast thou shrined life's better part
In the chancels of thy heart?
Have life's sweetest, noblest psalms
Calmed thee with their boons and balms?

In the rosary of years
Have the beads been pearly tears,
Or have sadder things than these
Caused the plaints when life should please?
Let thy eyes their veils unroll
That my glance may scan thy soul.

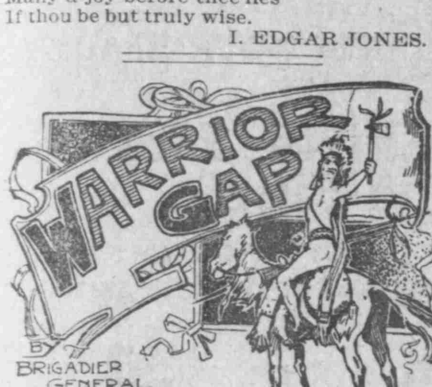
In their mystic depths I see
Things that were and are to be;
Sorrow with its gruesome touch
Hath not marred thy spirit much,
Yet thy path in coming days
May not pass through flowery ways.

Gird thyself for ills of earth—
Life hath moans as well as mirth—
For each joy a grief is born.
Dark night comes as oft as morn;
Be thou ready, for some years
Sow in toil to harvest tears.

Yet for thee the sun shall shine,
Ills touch lightly thee and thine;
Skies which arch in blue above
For thy eyes show stars of love;
Therefore be thou not afraid,
Lissome little brown-eyed maid.

There await such sprites as thee
Ills no mortal maid may flee,
But heaven's gold can gild the guile
Helpless to resist thy smile.
Maiden with the soft brown eyes,
Many a joy before thee lies
If thou be but truly wise.

I. EDGAR JONES.



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CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

"Were you looking for anyone, Mrs. Fletcher? I thought you were in your room."

"For Mr. Folsom, please, when he is at leisure," was the answer, in unruffled tones. "I believe it easier to take active part in the preparations than to lie there thinking."

At one the girls were to lunch at the fort, as has been said, and it was time for them to dress. There were other matters on which Elinor much wished to talk with her father and, with more reluctance than she had yet experienced, she left him to hear what Mrs. Fletcher might have to say. The conference was brief enough, whatever its nature, for presently his voice was heard at the foot of the stairs.

"I'm going over to the depot a few minutes, Daught. I wish to see Burleigh. Don't wait for me. Start whenever you are ready. Where do the boys meet you?"

"Here, daddy, at half-past twelve."

It was high noon now, and the ruddy-faced old fellow grew redder as the summer sun beat down on his gray head, but he strode sturdily down the broad avenue that led to the heart of the bustling new town, turned to the right at the first cross street beyond his own big block, and ten minutes' brisk tramp brought him to the gateway of Burleigh's stockaded inclosure. Two or three employes lounging about the gate were gazing curiously within. Silently they let him pass them by, but a sound of angry voices rose upon the heated air. Just within the gate stood the orderly trumpeter holding two horses by the reins, one of them Marshall Dean's, and a sudden idea occurred to Folsom as he glanced at the open windows of the office building. There was no mistaking the speaker within. It was Burleigh.

"Leave my office instantly, sir, or I'll prefer charges that will stick—"

"Not till I've said what I came to say, Maj. Burleigh. I've abundant evidence of what you've been saying at my expense. You asserted that I lost my nerve the day we met Red Cloud's band—you who never dared get out of the ambulance until the danger was over. It's common talk in the troop. At Frayne, at Reno, and here at Emory you have maligned me just as you did in the cars to my friend here, Mr. Loomis, and in hearing of my sister. I will not accept your denial nor will I leave your office till you swallow your words."

"Then, by God, I'll have you thrown out, you young whipsnapper!"

And then Folsom, with fear at his heart, ran around to the doorway to interpose. He came too late. There was a sound of a furious scuffle within, a rattling of chairs, a crunching of feet on sanded floor, and as he sprang up the steps he saw Dean easily squirming out from the grasp of some member of the clerical force, who, at his master's bidding, had thrown himself upon the young officer, who then deftly tripped his heels from under him and dropped him on the floor, while Loomis confronted the others who would have made some show of obeying orders. And then there was the whirr of a whip lash, a crack and snap and swish, and a red welt shot across Burleigh's livid face as he himself staggered back to his desk. With raging tongue and frantic oath he leaped out again, a leveled pistol in his hand, but even before he could pull trigger, or Folsom interpose, Loomis' stick came down like a flash on the outstretched wrist, and the pistol clattered to the floor.

"Good God, boys! what are you doing?" cried the trader, as he hurled himself between them. "Stop this instantly. Sit down, Burleigh. Come out, Dean—come out at once! And you, too, Loomis."

"I'm entirely ready—now," said the cavalry lieutenant, though his eyes were flaming and his lips were rigid. "But whenever Maj. Burleigh wants to finish this he can find me," and with these words he backed slowly to the door, face to the panting and disordered foe.

"Finish this! you young hound, I'll finish you!" screamed Burleigh, as he shook his clenched fist at the retiring pair.

"Go, boys, go!" implored Folsom. "I'll see you by and by. No—no—sit still, Burleigh. Don't you speak. This must stop right here."

And so the old man's counsels prevailed, and the two friends, with grave, pallid, but determined faces, came out into the sunshine, and with much deliberation and somewhat ostentatious calm proceeded to where the orderly waited with the horses.

"You will see—the ladies out to camp, Loomis?" asked Dean. "I must gallop on ahead."

"Ay, ay, go on, I reckon—"

But on this scene there suddenly appeared a third party, in the partial guise of an officer and the grip of Bacchus. Lurching down the office steps, with flushed face and bloodshot eyes, came Capt. Newhall.

"Gen'l'm'n," said he, thickly, "le'm 'ntroduce m'self. Haven't th' honor y'r 'quaint's. Im Ca'm New(hic)'ll. Cap'n N-n(hic)oohaul (this cost prodigious effort and much balancing), an'—an' you sherv'd that f'ler per-perflicky ri'. He's damn scoun'rl—gen'lemen—an' ole frien' mine."

For an instant he stood swaying unsteadily, with half extended hand. For an instant the two young officers gazed at him in contempt, then turned abruptly away.

"Good Lord, Marshall," said Loomis, as they cleared the gate, "if that's the only approbation this day's work will bring us what will the results be? You served him right, no doubt, but—" and an ominous shake of the head wound up the sentence.

"But or no but," said Dean, "it's done now, and I'd do it again."

There was no dinner party at Folsom's that evening. At two a messenger trotted out to the post with a note for Miss Folsom to apprise her of the fact, and without a word or change of color she put it into her pocket. The garrison girls were bent on having them spend the afternoon, but presently Miss Folsom found a moment in which to signal to Jess, and at three they were driving home.

"You will surely come out this evening and hear the music and have a dance," were the parting salutations, as, with skillful hands, the young girl took up the reins.

"We hope to," was her smiling answer. Jess was clinging to her brother's hand as he stood by the wheel, and Loomis had already clambered in beside her.

"Please come, Marshall," pleaded Jessie; but he shook his head.

"I must be at camp this evening, sister mine. We go to stables in an hour. You will come back, Loomis?"

"As soon as I've seen—" and a significant nod supplied the ellipsis.

Something ominous was in the wind and both girls knew it. Loomis, usually gay and chatty, was oddly silent, as

The pistol clattered to the floor.

the light, covered wagon sped swiftly homeward. Beside the fair charioteer sat a young officer of the infantry who, vastly rejoicing that Dean could not go, had laughingly possessed himself of the vacant place, and to him Miss Folsom had to talk. But they parted from their escorts at the gate and hastened within doors. Just as Elinor expected, papa had not come home. It was nearly six when she saw him striding slowly and thoughtfully up the road and she met him at the gate.

"Tell me what has happened, daddy," was her quiet greeting, as she linked her hands over his burly arm, and looking into her uplifted, thoughtful eyes, so full of intelligence and deep affection, he bent and kissed her cheek.

"By Jove, daughter, I believe it's the best thing I can do. Come into the library."

That night the moon beamed brightly down on the wide-spreading valley, glinting on the peaks, still snow-tipped, far in the southern sky, and softening the rugged faces of the nearer range, black with their clustering beard of spruce and pine. The band played sweetly on the broad parade until after the tattoo drums had echoed over the plains and the garrison belles strolled aimlessly in the elfin light—all nature so lavishly inviting, yet so little valued now that nearly every man was gone. Out in the camp of C troop men were flitting swiftly to and fro, horses were starting and stamping at the picket ropes, eager eyes and tilted ears inquiring the cause of all this stir and bustle among the tents. In front of the canvas home of the young commander a grave-faced group had gathered, two gentle girls among them, one with tear-dimmed eyes. Old Folsom stood apart in murmured conference with Griggs, the sutler. The regimental quartermaster was deep in consultation with Dean, the two officers pacing slowly up and down. One or two young people from the garrison had spent a few minutes earlier in the evening striving to be interesting to the girls; but Jessie's tearful eyes and Miss Folsom's grave manner proved hint sufficient to induce them to withdraw, each bidding Dean good night, safe journey and speedy return, and the hand-clasps were kind and cordial. The colonel himself had paid a brief visit to camp, his adjutant in attendance, and had given Mr. Dean ten minutes of talk concerning a country Dean knew all about, but that "Pecksniff" had never seen. "It is a responsibility I own I should have expected to see placed on older shoulders," said he, "but prudence and—and, let me suggest, cool-headedness—will probably carry you through. You will be ready to start—"

"Ready now, sir, so far as that's concerned; but we start at three."

"Oh, ah—yes, of course—well—ah—it leaves me practically with no command, but I'll hope to have you back, Mr. Dean. Good-by." Then as he passed Folsom the colonel whispered: "That's $10,000 as good as thrown away."

"Ten thousand dollars!" answered the trader in reply. "What do you mean?"

"That's what those boys are to run the gantlet with. My—ah—protests are entirely unavailing."

For a moment Folsom stood there dumb. "Do you mean," he finally cried, "that—that it's beyond Frayne that they're going—that it's money they're to take?"

"Hush! Certainly, but it mustn't be known. Every road agent in Wyoming would be out, and every Indian from the Platte to Hudson bay would be on the watch. He's to take ten men and slip through. The money comes out from Burleigh to-night."

The colonel turned away, and, beckoning to his staff officer to join him, stumped onward to the garrison. The prolonged wail of the bugle, aided by the rising night wind, sent the solemn strains of taps sailing down the dimly-lighted valley, and with staring eyes old Folsom stood gazing after the departing officers, then whirled about toward the tents. There in front of Dean stood Pappoose, her hands clasped tightly over the hilt of the saber the "striker" had leaned against the lid of the mess chest but a moment before, her lovely face smiling up into the owner's.

"You'll come back by way of Hal's, won't you?" she was blithely saying. "Perhaps I can coax father to take us there to meet you."

"By heaven, Burleigh," muttered the old trader to himself, "are you the deepest man I ever met, or only the most infernal scoundrel?"

CHAPTER XV.

A sleepless night had old John Folsom, and with the sun he was up again and hurriedly dressing. Noiseless as he strove to be he was discovered, for as he issued from his room into the dim light of the upper hall there stood Pappoose.

"Poor Jess has been awake an hour," said she. "We've been trying to see the troops through the glass. They must have started before daybreak, for there's nothing on the road to Frayne."

"It disappeared over the divide three miles out," he answered vaguely, and conscious that her clear eyes were studying his face. "I didn't sleep well, either. We shall be having news from Hal to-day, and the mail rider comes down from Frayne."

She had thrown about her a long, loose wrapper, and her lustrous hair tumbled like a brown-black torrent down over her shoulders and back. Steadfastly the brown eyes followed his every move.

"It is an hour to breakfast time, daddy dear; let me make you some coffee before you go out."

"What? Who said I was going out?" he asked, forcing a smile; then, more gravely: "I'll be back in thirty minutes, dear, but wait a moment I cannot. I want to catch a man before he can possibly ride away."

He bent and kissed her hurriedly, and went briskly down the stairs. In the lower hall he suddenly struck a parlor match that flared up and illumined the winding staircase to the third story. Some thought as sudden prompted her to glance aloft, just in time to catch a glimpse of a woman's face withdrawing swiftly over the balcony rail. In her hatred of anything that savored of spying the girl could have called aloud a demand to know what Mrs. Fletcher wanted, but strange things were in the wind, as she was learning, and something whispered silence. Slowly she returned to Jessie's side, and together once more they searched with the glasses the distant trail that, distinctly visible now in the slant of the morning sun, twisted up the northward slopes on the winding way to Frayne. Not a whiff of dust could they see.

Meantime John Folsom strode swiftly down the well-known path to the quartermaster's depot, a tumult of suspicion and conjecture whirling in his brain. As he walked he recalled the many hints and stories that had come to his ears of Burleigh's antecedents elsewhere and his associations here. With all his reputation for enterprise and wealth, there were "shady" tales of gambling transactions and salted mines and watered stocks that attached perhaps more directly to the men with whom he foregathered than to him. "A man is known by the company he keeps," said Folsom, and Burleigh's cronies, until Folsom came to settle in Gate City, had been almost exclusively among the "sharps," gamblers and their kindred, the projectors and prospectors ever preying on the unwary on the outer wave of progress. Within the past six months he had seen much of him, for Burleigh was full of business enterprises, had investments everywhere, was lavish in invitation and suggestion, was profuse in offers of aid of any kind if aid were wanted. He had gone so far as to say that he knew from experience how with his wealth tied up in real estate and mines a man often found himself in need of a few thousand in spot cash, and as Folsom was buying and building, if at any time he found himself a little short and needed ten or twenty thousand, say, why, Burleigh's bank account was at his service, etc. It all sounded large and liberal, and Folsom, whose lot for years had been cast with a somewhat threadbare array of people, content with little, impecunious but honest, wondered what manner of martial man this was. Burleigh did not loudly boast of his wealth and influence, but impressed in some ponderous way his hearers with a sense of both. Yet, ever since that run to Warrior's Gap, a change had come over Burleigh. He talked more of mines and money and showed less, and now, only yesterday, when the old man's heart had mellowed to him because he had first held him wholly to blame for Dean's arrest and later found him pleading for the young fellow's release, a strange thing had happened. Burleigh confided to him that he had a simply fabulous opportunity—a chance to buy out a mine that experts secretly told him was what years later he would have called a "bonanza," but that in the late sixties was locally known as a "Shanghai." Twenty-five thousand dollars would do the trick, but his money was tied up. Would Folsom go in with him, put up twelve thousand five hundred, and Burleigh would do the rest? Folsom had been bitten by two mines that yielded only rattlesnakes, and he couldn't be lured. Then, said Burleigh, wouldn't Folsom go on his note, so that he could borrow at the bank? Folsom seldom went on anybody's note. It was as bad as mining. He begged off, and left Burleigh disappointed, but not disconcerted. "I can raise it without trouble," said he, "but it may take forty-eight hours to get the cash here, and I thought you would be glad to be let in on the ground floor."

"I've been let in to too many floors, major," said he. "You'll have to excuse me." And so Burleigh, with his Louisiana captain, had driven off to the fort, where Newhall asked for Griggs and was importunate, nor did Griggs' whisky, freely tendered to all comers of the commissioned class, tend to assuage his desire. Back had they gone to town, and then came the cataclysm of noon.

[To Be Continued.]

LAUGHED DURING SERVICE.

Dublin Congregation Had a Merry Time at the Minister's Humor.

Religious services in Ireland are not always solemn, according to the statement of an English clergyman. "The only time I ever heard a congregation laugh unrestrainedly during the regular services in a cathedral," said he, "was back in the '80's, when I was a resident of dear, dirty Dublin. On one Sunday morning the archbishop of Cork preached. He was a splendid man, an Irishman to the backbone, and possessed of as fine a brogue as ever distinguished a son of Erin. His congregation was made up of the very essence of fashion in Dublin, which in those days was one of the greatest social centers in the world. Notoriously, people were living beyond their means, for the income from the landed estates of Ireland had taken a big tumble. But that made no difference, and good dressing went as a matter of course, and was one of the smallest of the extravagances. The archbishop preached on the subject of extravagance, and spoke particularly of overdressing as a prerequisite to attendance at church. His sermon was a bitter arraignment of the sin of debt and the wickedness of setting the heart on fashion and dress. He attacked the overdressed women, and wound up this particular reference this way:

"'Now, supposin' every one of ye—every one, man and woman, should stand up in this church, take off the clothes ye have not paid for, just walkin' out with only the things on your backs ye have paid for—a pretty lookin' lot of scarecrows ye'd be.'

"There was a pause until the real significance of the suggestion had percolated through the members of his congregation, then some one snickered. Everyone was picturing to him and herself the real scene that would occur should the archbishop's idea be carried into effect, while wife looked at husband and members of each family nudged one another. The ludicrous side was irresistible, and the laugh was general."

An Obliging Servant.

Employer—Well, Pat, they tell me I made a fool of myself last night.

Pat—It's not for the loikes o' me to be sayin' yis or no to that, sor.

"But isn't it true that I was so loaded that you had to carry me home from the club?"

"It is, sor."

"And I suppose you had a good deal of trouble doing it."

"Will, Oi can't say about the trouble, but Oi had me regrits."

"You regretted to see me in that condition, of course."

"Not igzactly that, sor, but Oi regretted that ye didn't t'ink of it in toime an' ax me to carry half yer load."—Richmond Dispatch.

Of Course.

"She talked to him just to let him know she wasn't afraid of old bachelors."

"Yes?"

"And he talked to her just to let her know that he wasn't afraid of widows."

"Well?"

"Oh, they're married now."—Chicago Record.

Love!

Mabel—I would never marry a man I did not love.

Maudie — But suppose a really wealthy man should propose?

"I should love him, of course."—N. Y. World.